MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM



FALL 2006 EDITION

County of San Diego - Parks and Open Space Program

Contributing to the County of San Diego Strategic Plan Environment Initiative "Promote natural resource management strategies that ensure environmental preservation, quality of life, and economic development"

Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch Open Space Preserve to receive a Visitor Center



Santa Margarita Watershed Nutrient Studies

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This newly-acquired open space preserve provides habitat for Stephens' kangaroo rat, the arroyo toad, golden eagles and ferruginous hawks. Photo courtesy of The Nature Conservancy.

The County Acquires 420 Acres of Ramona Grasslands

Collaboration among County of San Diego departments and The Nature Conservancy led to the acquisition of 420 acres of the Ramona Grasslands for a significant preserve area. The purchase is consistent with the draft North County MSCP. While the land is currently used for cattle grazing, it also

provides habitat for many sensitive species including the Stephens' kangaroo rat, the arroyo toad, golden eagles and ferruginous hawks.

On August, 25, 2006, the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Department of Public Works

(DPW) negotiated with The Nature Conservancy to buy the 420-acre property, valued at approximately \$3 million. The Nature Conservancy was instrumental in this transaction and even provided grant money to facilitate the purchase. The DPR's 390-acre share of the property is being preserved as an open space park. The DPR is in the process of preparing a long-term management



The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation is preparing a long-term management plan for this property.

plan to control invasive species and protect natural species. Trails will be included to provide public access to the land. The DPW 30-acre share will be used as mitigation for Ramona Airport expansion impacts.

Living History for National Public Lands Day at

By Greg Hill
Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office,
Bureau of Land Management

Local staff and volunteers from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Old Town San Diego State Historic Park staged a living history reenactment of the exploration and surveys of public lands at the Historic Park on September 30, 2006, in recognition of the 13th annual National Public Lands Day (NPLD).

Eight BLM staff and volunteers were joined by six State Park staff and volunteers and one former wild burro for the event.



BLM staff get into the pioneering spirit by reenacting the exploration of San Diego in the 1800s. Photo Courtesy of BLM.



Groundbreaking for Visitor Center at Sycamore Canyon/ Goodan Ranch

On September 12, 2006, a groundbreaking ceremony was held at the Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch Open Space Preserve to celebrate the building of a new Visitor Center. The planned 2,900 square foot building is one of the restorations after the October 2003 wildfires. It will include a ranger's office, meeting room, kitchenette and museum in the lobby. The County of San Diego, City of Poway, City of Santee, California Department of Fish and Game $\label{eq:continuous} \begin{picture}(2000){0.99\textwidth} \put(0.000){0.99\textwidth} \put(0.000$ in the groundbreaking event.



Brian Jones, Vice-Mayor of Santee, said a few words on the warm day in September. Photo courtesy of Friends of Goodan Ranch.



Several public officials helped at the groundbreaking for the new Visitor Center including County Supervisor Dianne Jacob, City of Poway Mayor Mickey Cafagna and three City of Poway Councilmembers. They were joined by members of the Friends of Goodan Ranch and California Department of Fish & Game.

Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch contains more than 10 miles of hiking trails, along with a staging area for horses open seven days a week. This preserve is important for conservation since it has 1,700 acres of coastal sage scrub and chaparral-covered hills which host endangered plants and animals.

The preserve also has historical value. In the 1930s, Goodan Ranch was a working ranch. Historical structures still exist on site such as the Stone House built by the Goodan Family in 1938-1939. However, the barn and cottages have since been destroyed.

National Public Lands Day cont.

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The General Land Office and survey camp was used to demonstrate how the exploration and surveys of the public lands in the west led to the BLM Public Lands, National Parks, Monuments, Forests, and Wildlife Refuges the public enjoys today. The State Historic Park offers living history programs every month. The BLM/NPLD program was the living history event for the month of September.

Old Town San Diego State Historic Park is the most visited unit of the California State Park system. The living history survey camp was open on the historic Old Town plaza from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday. The BLM talked with several hundred visitors about the General Land Office. the Homestead Act, and other important milestones in the history of the public lands. Visitors viewed 19th century survey instruments, public land maps, scientific specimens from public lands (animal skins, fossils, etc.), and demonstrations of surveying techniques and map making. Visitors also received "deeds" to their 650 million acres of public lands. A modern display of today's public lands and BLM literature brought the story up to the present.

BLM staff and volunteers that participated were John Kalish, Paul Kalish, Justin Seastrand, Joyce Schlachter, Janave Byergo, Greg Hill, Tracy Albrecht, and Lance Albrecht.



BLM staff survey land the old fashioned way. Photo Courtesy of BLM.



San Diego County conducts a Nutrient Study in the Santa Margarita Watershed

Santa Margarita Gorge is located on Santa Margarita Ecological Preserve.

The State of California Water Resources Control Board awarded the County of San Diego Watershed Protection Program a grant of \$600,000 in October of 2006 for a nutrient reduction and monitoring project. This project will research and demonstrate best management practices (BMPs) applicable to agricultural runoff from avocado groves and nurseries located within the Santa Margarita River Watershed.

The Santa Margarita River Watershed traverses both San Diego and Riverside counties; the southern 27% of the watershed is located within the County of San Diego. Of the area located within San Diego County, approximately 42% of the land is developed, with half of that developed land in agricultural use.

The grant project will investigate the effectiveness of BMPs that reduce nutrient availability (i.e. alter/optimize irrigation practices and fertilizer rates) and remove nutrients from runoff (i.e. provide compost or vegetation buffer strips). Implementation of successful demonstration BMPs by local growers will result in long-term reduction of nutrients in the Santa Margarita River Watershed, which will lead to the long-term improvement of water quality, aquatic habitats, and overall stream health. An indirect benefit of this project will be improved groundwater quality due to improved surface water quality and therefore an improved quality of water infiltration into the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin. The improvement of the quality of recharge water to the groundwater in Rainbow Valley Basin will also protect its beneficial use as a potable water resource. Additionally, this project and the installed BMPs will directly benefit the implementation of the Rainbow Creek Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

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The mouth of the Santa Margarita is a feeding and nesting ground for birds.





Mountains and valleys dot the Santa Margarita Watershed.

Nutritional Study in the Santa Margarita Watershed cont.

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This grant project is very important to the County of San Diego because five waterways within the Santa Margarita River Watershed are listed as impaired on the Clean Water Act section 303(d) list, mostly as a result of having too many nutrients inputs. Excessive nutrient inputs are primarily thought to be a result of urban runoff from agriculture, nursery operations, septic

systems and golf course operations. Other serious water quality and environmental concerns in the watershed include excessive sedimentation from development and agricultural land uses, groundwater degradation and contamination from excess nitrates and other salts, habitat loss, channelization, flooding and scour.

Given that the single largest developed land use within this watershed is agriculture, this grant award will hopefully lead the way to creating significant improvements for the waterways of the Santa Margarita River Watershed. Results and design parameters developed during this grant project will be transferred to local growers and stakeholders through an outreach and education program. With widespread and long-term implementation of effective BMP technologies, nutrient and sediment load reductions will be realized for the Santa Margarita River Watershed.



Pallid Bats have bodies that are 4 1/4" to 5 1/8" long and a wingspan up to 15 1/2" wide. Photo Courtesy of Drew Stokes and Cheryl Brehme

Pallid bats are late-night bats known for their pale fur and large ears. Since these bats are a California Species of Special Concern, the County MSCP staff are working with United States Geological Survey biologists to determine the specific areas in San Diego where these bats live. Roosts are usually found in rock crevices, under bridges, caves and in hollows of trees. The coastal range of the Pallid Bats has been disappearing at a faster rate than other species with which they share habitat.

The Pallid Bats' prominent ears help them hear the footsteps of insects so they can swoop down for a meal. Unlike other bats, Pallid bats commonly feed on the ground. They eat insects such as flightless beetles, crickets and grasshoppers.

They have a range of calls from an insect-like buzz to clear high-pitched whine and clicks. If you hear these calls, you may want to steer clear because a skunk-like odor is secreted by the glands on the muzzle when the bats are disturbed.



Hot the Press

New MSCP Brochures and Posters

The MSCP Outreach Committee and the County of San Diego Dept. of Parks and Recreation have new materials to help you enjoy and discover the recreational and wildlife resources in San Diego County.



MSCP Species Map-Fold Brochure

This brochure has full color pictures of 39 animals on the front and 46 plants on the back. All these species are protected under the existing MSCP Plan that covers the southwestern portion of San Diego County. The brochure is approximately 23" by 28" when unfolded. It is available free of charge. Contact mscp@sdcounty.ca.gov for copies or download it online at www.mscp-sandiego.org.



Our Outdoors Tri-Fold Brochure

This three-panel brochure gives an overview of what the MSCP is and how it works. It includes facts about San Diego's biodiversity and eight ways you can help. It is available free of charge. Contact mscp@sdcounty.ca.gov for copies or download it online at www.mscp-sandiego.org.





Experience San Diego County Trails

The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation recently completed a four-panel brochure detailing hiking trails in 27 parks in San Diego County. This brochure includes a map, park addresses, park hours and facilities available at each park. The trails range from easy strolls along San Elijo Lagoon to hikes in the hills of El Capitan. It is available free of charge. Please pick up this brochure at any County park, download copies at www.co.san-diego.ca.us/parks/hikes.html or request copies by calling 858-694-3030.

MSCP Poster

This poster answers the Why? What? and Where? of the MSCP. It describes the reasoning, history, facts, and location of the MSCP with color photos and text. This poster is approximately 36" by 36" and is available from the County of San Diego at a cost of \$32 to cover printing costs. It is printed on UV-resistant glossy paper with UV-resistant inks. For an additional cost, it can be mounted on foam core and framed. Contact mscp@sdcounty.ca.gov to order a copy or download a pdf for free at www.mscp-sandiego.org.



New Faces at the County MSCP



Christine Sloan is the new Watershed and Environmental Planner.

Christine Sloan transferred into the County of San Diego's MSCP-Watershed Planning division in August 2006 from Regulatory Planning. She comes to the group with nearly two years of planning experience and a background in ecology and

"It is my goal to implement a low-impact, water-sensitive design program to help decrease storm water runoff, improve water quality, and protect the watersheds of San Diego County."

— Christine

environmental stressors. Christine received her Master's degree in Biological Sciences in 1999, with a focus on pesticides and amphibian declines. Christine is presently continuing her education with UCSD's certificate program in Urban Planning and Development. One of Christine's projects is to prepare a manual that will provide developers with additional options for reducing storm water runoff while still providing for urban growth.

"I am learning my way around more and more, but I can already tell that this will be a very worthwhile experience. I look forward to working with a team of such helpful and intelligent people."

— Katie

Katie Wu joined the MSCP team in October 2006. She grew up in Thousand Oaks, California and is currently a fourth year undergraduate at UCSD majoring in Ecology, Behavior, and Evolution. She will be graduating

in June and plans to take a year off to work and travel before going into a graduate program. Katie spent last year studying abroad in England, which sparked an interest in traveling, and plans to go to Thailand this summer. Living abroad also encouraged Katie to become more globally aware and further fueled her interest in conservation and environmental management. In her spare time, Katie enjoys painting, playing tennis, and hiking.



Katie Wu (left) and Naomi Trejo (right) are MSCP's two new student workers.

"In the short time
I have worked with MSCP
I have found out about many
different ways to conserve our natural
resources both biologically and
legislatively. It has been a
real learning experience."

— Naomi

Naomi Trejo started working with MSCP in August 2006. After earning her undergraduate degree in Sociology from Grinnell College, Naomi is attending her first year in SDSU's City Planning Master's

Program. Sustainable development has been her focus at the university. At SDSU Naomi works as a Graduate Assistant for which she helps a professor conduct research for his new book on city planning. When she is not studying, Naomi enjoys hiking, camping and playing bass in a band. Last summer she traveled to Inyo National Forest to see the oldest living organisms on earth, the Bristlecone Pine trees.

County of San Diego Parks and Open Space Program

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